City of Seattle
Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Application Number: 3009722

Applicant Name: NW Permit Consultants for the University of Washington

Address of Proposal: 2501 NE 45th St (project at 4000 Walla Walla Rd. NE).

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow three structures accessory to an existing spectator sports facility; (a 760-gross square foot (gsf), one-story ticket/concession building; a 1,600 gsf, one-story restroom building; and an 8,150 gsf, two-story baseball team building). Determination of Non-Significance prepared by the University of Washington.

The following approval is required:

SEPA – to Approve, Condition or Deny pursuant to (Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 25.05.660).

SEPA DETERMINATION: [ ] Exempt [X] DNS[1] [ ] EIS

[ ] DNS with conditions

[ ] DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND DATA

Site and Vicinity Description

The site is located in the University of Washington Seattle Campus east of Montlake Blvd. N.E. and south and east of the E-1 parking lot. It is zoned MIO-37', L-1 (Major Institution Overlay with a 37 foot height limit and an underlying zone of Lowrise One). The soccer and baseball

[1] The University of Washington Capital Projects Office prepared an Environmental Checklist and published a Declaration of Non-Significance on January 6, 2009.

competition fields and stands are in site 59E in the University of Washington Seattle Campus Master Plan (CMP) 2003. The East Campus area is the location of both intercollegiate and intramural athletics.

Proposal Description

The project involves construction of three support buildings for the existing intercollegiate competition baseball and soccer fields. The buildings include a 760-gross square foot (gsf), one-story ticket/concession building; a 1,600 gsf, one-story restroom building; and an 8,150 gsf, two-story baseball team building. Related site improvements include: pedestrian paving, including a paved pedestrian plaza around the restroom and ticket/concession buildings; paved access drive; parking lot driveway curb cut improvements, new ADA curb ramps on Walla Walla Road; improved passenger loading/unloading zone at the corner of Walla Walla Road and Wahkiakum Lane including bollards and curb modifications; fences and gates; site walls; landscaping and irrigation; trash dumpster enclosure; and site furnishings including bicycle racks and picnic tables. Utilities include providing water, sewer, and electrical service to the buildings and stubs for potential future improvements.

The proposal provides for similar facilities and functions to those under an expired 1997 City of Seattle Master Use Permit and SEPA DNS which were never constructed. The current proposal differs from the 1997 proposal in that it places the restroom, ticket/concession, changing/meeting rooms, and storage functions in separate buildings instead of including them as part of a baseball grandstand structure that may not be constructed at this time due to budget limitations. The buildings are located within the site limits covered by the 1997 permit.

Public Comment

The public comment period was from February 19, 2009 to March 4, 2009. No comments were received.

ANALYSIS – SEPA

The University of Washington is the SEPA Lead Agency responsible for making the threshold determination with respect to this proposal. The University issued a Determination of Non-Significance, on January 6, 2009. There was a fourteen day comment period which ended on January 19, 2009. No comments were received on the Determination of Non-Significance. The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, certain neighborhood plans, and other policies explicitly referenced may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority. The Overview Policy states in part: "*where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation*," subject to some limitations. Under specific circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D 1-7) mitigation can be required.

The policies for specific elements of the environment (SMC 25.05.675) describe the relationship with the Overview Policy and indicate when the Overview Policy is applicable. Not all elements of the environment are subject to the Overview Policy (e.g., Traffic and Transportation). A detailed discussion of some of the specific elements of the environment and potential impacts is appropriate.

Short-term (Construction) Impacts

The project is likely to have short-term adverse, construction-related environmental impacts with respect to vegetation, earth, noise, air, water quality, traffic, and pedestrian circulation. No other elements of the environment appear likely to be adversely affected, and no other elements have been identified in the Environmental Checklist.

Air, Earth, and Water. The project is likely to cause some minor soil erosion from grading and other site work while the earth is exposed. These include decreased air quality due to dust and other particulates produced by construction equipment and operations, and possibly the tracking of mud and dirt onto adjacent streets by construction vehicles. These air and earth impacts are expected to be minor in scope and would be limited to the period of site preparation, estimated to be about four months. Several adopted City codes and ordinances provide adequate mitigation. The Street Use Ordinance provides for watering the streets to suppress dust; the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code provides for mitigation of earth impacts related to grading and excavation, such as soil erosion and runoff and the Seattle Building Code provides for appropriateness of construction measures in general. (In a separate section below, this analysis addresses truck traffic associated with construction activities.)

The site is generally flat with slopes not exceeding 1/2 % to 4%. The site is a former landfill and is underlain by 22 to 24 feet of granular fill, underlain by 30 to 36 feet of mixed refuse and wood waste fill, underlain by 13 to 17 feet of peat, underlain by 45 to 62 feet of very soft silt/clay, all underlain by dense to very dense sand. Groundwater is shallow in this area (2.5 feet below the ground surface.)

A minor grading of on-site soils and imported fill area needed to accomplish gently sloping, well drained, pavement and lawn areas. Fill material will consist of clean, well drained imported sands and topsoil from local sources. Over excavation (approximately one foot) and structural fill will be required in the areas to be paved. Excavation will be required for the building foundations.

Erosion could occur during construction, primarily if construction were to occur during wet weather. Temporary Erosion and Sediment Control Measures (TESC) would be implemented as a Seattle code-required measure to reduce risk of construction-related erosion.

All earthwork and site preparation on site would be conducted in compliance with relevant grading criteria of the Seattle Municipal Code (Section 22.802). The SEPA Checklist lists measures which would be implemented to reduce risk of construction-related erosion.

Soil stabilization will be assured by compliance with the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code, and the Building Code. Further, Director's Rule 16-2000 was developed to apply Best Management Practices (BMP's) to prevent erosion and sedimentation from leaving construction sites or where construction will impact receiving waters. The implementation of Best Management Practices, as contained in the DR 16-2000, is a requirement for construction permit approval.

Construction will result in localized, short-term increases in particulate and carbon monoxide associated with the removal of existing pavement, excavation, grading, soil compaction and operation of heavy trucks and smaller equipment. On-site activity and periodic traffic delays on adjacent streets could contribute to slight increases in localized vehicle emissions of carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide. It is not expected that increased suspended particulates or carbon monoxide emissions would cause violation of any local ambient air quality standards.

Methane gas emissions from fill and bog material beneath the site will be monitored during the construction period and measure take to prevent its accumulation in combustible concentrations.

Construction activities including worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacture of the construction materials themselves result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant due to the relatively minor contribution of greenhouse gas emissions from this project.

No SEPA policy based mitigation of these impacts is warranted.

Noise. Short-term noise from construction would be generated during working hours. Noise levels during construction would be expected to comply with the City of Seattle Noise Ordinance. Noise sources in the area include traffic on Montlake Boulevard NE, and NE 45th Street, as well as traffic on other local streets. There is noise from students already intensively using the area for recreation sports programs and there is noise from existing intercollegiate athletic baseball and soccer practices and games with spectators.

Given the relative isolation of the proposal site from sensitive receptors and the fairly high ambient noise levels already exist, it is concluded that mitigation of construction-related noise impacts is not warranted.

Circulation and Traffic. Pedestrian and bicycle routes would be temporarily affected by construction. Temporary bicycle and pedestrian routes are expected to be in effect for the duration of renovation and new construction. Bicycle parking would also be temporarily relocated to a nearby site.

The University of Washington and the contractor for the project will prepare a construction traffic plan for workers and construction vehicles. The plan shall outline delivery routes for truck trips to minimize disruption to traffic flow on adjacent streets and roadways, including appropriate signage, flaggers, route definitions, flow of vehicles and pedestrians during

construction. The plan shall identify truck and construction equipment circulation routes between the site and regional routes such as I-5 or SR 520. Truck traffic related to the construction activity should avoid peak periods of 7:00 – 9:00 AM and 3:00 -6:00 PM, Monday – Friday. It will also proscribe measures necessary for the protection of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists present in the project vicinity.

Parking. Parking for the subject site is located in Lot E-1. Any demand for additional parking related to construction activities would be provide in the existing E-1 parking lot which has adequate capacity. The project does not eliminate any parking spaces. E-1 contains 2,551 spaces.

Long-term (Use-related) Impacts

The following long-term or use-related impacts were identified in the environmental checklist: plants and animals, transportation, environmental health, aesthetics and land use. Elements of the environment not discussed below are not adversely affected and/or are adequately mitigated by existing codes and ordinances and/or mitigating components of the proposal itself. These long-term impacts are not considered significant because the impacts are minor in scope.

Plants and Animals. Approximately 16 new deciduous street trees will be added and 3,000 square feet of unplanted area will be planted with lawn along the east side of Walla Walla Road. Approximately 11,500 square feet of gravel behind the existing dugouts will be replaced with lawn.

A Fish and Wildlife Report was prepared for the project. There are no threatened or endangered species known to exist in the proposal site area or nearby.

No SEPA based mitigation is deemed necessary for the protection of plants or animals.

Environmental Health. The site is a former landfill that contains contaminated soil and groundwater. Planned excavations to 10-feet or less for buildings and utilities are not expected to encounter landfill refuse. Methane gas is produced at the site from decomposition of landfill debris. Methane is a non-toxic flammable gas that can explode when present in the air in concentrations of 5%-15% by volume. Methane can present an explosion hazard on or within 1,000 feet of a landfill. Underground, methane gas can migrate laterally and accumulate in pockets inside and outside the landfill boundaries.

The University has undertaken quarterly landfill methane gas monitoring since April 2005. Data is collected from 17 monitoring wells, one of which (MP-2B) is in close proximity to the site. Continual methane monitoring by the University will help ensure safety. In addition, structures will be constructed to ensure proper and adequate ventilation, fire protection for all interior spaces, and emergency vehicle access. Mitigating measures will comply with applicable City of Seattle regulations, the University of Washington Montlake Landfill Methane Mitigation Plan, Operational Guidance for Maintenance and Development Practices Over the Montlake Landfill and the Montlake Landfill Project Guide. Proposed buildings and enclosed structures will include a gas management system consisting of a passive venting system in conjunction with a vapor barrier. In addition, all buildings will have methane sensors and alarms attached to the mechanical systems to provide additional exhaust should methane infiltrate the building envelope. The designs will also utilize water relief measures under the building to prevent

liquefaction in the event of an earthquake. During foundation construction, the area will be monitored periodically for the presence of combustible gas. DPD concludes that no further mitigation is warranted in this regard.

Environmentally Critical Area. The proposal site is within mapped Environmentally Critical Areas for potential liquefaction and peat settlement. ECA regulations in place will adequately insure construction measures used will withstand any expected liquefaction event and that the constructed environment will not adversely affect the peat soils beneath the site. No SEPA based mitigation measures to protect these environmentally critical areas is warranted.

Land Use Patterns. The SEPA Checklist outlines direct impacts and the project's relationship to surrounding uses. The intensity of the proposed new use and its interaction with existing surrounding uses appears to be within the accepted framework of the Seattle CMP 2003 and the 1998 City-University Agreement, as well as the City of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Code. DPD concludes that no further mitigation is warranted in this regard.

Noise. The SEPA Checklist notes that the City of Seattle's noise ordinance applies to receiving property lines and does not apply within the University Campus. No sensitive noise receptors are in proximity to the proposal site. DPD concludes that no SEPA policy based mitigation is warranted in this regard.

Light and Glare. The fields are already lighted and negative effects from existing lighting are not within the purview of this SEPA analysis. The lighting used on the exterior of the buildings will be directional and screened to prevent glare. The lighting will be limited to what is required for safety and security. As proposed, DPD concludes that no further mitigation is warranted.

Transportation. The SEPA Checklist analyzes transportation impacts to vehicle circulation, traffic safety, transit services, pedestrian and bicycle circulation and parking. For nearby intersections, traffic impacts resulting from the project's long term (operational) use appear to be negligible at peak hours.

Pedestrian pathway, sidewalks, and bicycle pathways are provided throughout campus. ADA parking would be provided per City Code.
Considering the analysis, DPD concludes that no further mitigation for long-term traffic and parking impacts is warranted.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Operational activities, primarily vehicular trips associated with the project and the projects' energy consumption, are expected to result in increases in carbon dioxide which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant due to the relatively minor contribution of greenhouse gas emissions from this project.

CUCAC Review

CUCAC (City University Community Advisory Committee) has reviewed the project and has no adverse comments.

CONCLUSION – SEPA

In conclusion, DPD finds several effects on the environment resulting from the proposed project. However, proposed mitigating features together with the conditions imposed below are sufficient to mitigate specific impacts identified in the SEPA Checklist, its studies, and the foregoing analysis to lessen or prevent impacts no regulated by codes or ordinances, per adopted City policies.

The other impacts noted here as mitigated by code or by condition are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation by condition.

DPD approved the project, subject to conditions listed below.

CONDITIONS – SEPA

Prior to Issuance of Grading or Construction Permit(s)

1. The University of Washington will prepare a construction traffic plan for workers, for review and approval by DPD. The plan shall outline delivery routes for truck trips to minimize disruption to traffic flow on adjacent streets and roadways, including appropriate signage, flaggers, route definitions, flow of vehicles and pedestrians during construction. The plan shall indentify truck and construction equipment circulation routes between the site and regional routes such as I-5 or SR 520. Truck traffic related to the construction activity should avoid peak periods of 7:00 – 9:00 AM and 3:00 -6:00 PM, Monday – Friday. It will also proscribe measures necessary for the protection of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists present in the project vicinity.

Before and During Construction

The following condition(s), to be enforced during construction will be posed in a location on the property line that is visible and accessible to the public and to construction personnel from the street right-of-way. If more than one street abuts the site, conditions will be posed at each street. The conditions will be affixed to placards prepared by DPD. The placards will e issued along with the building permit set of plans (or with the demolition permit if it is issued separately). The placards will be laminated with clear plastic or other weatherproofing material and will remain in place for the duration of construction. It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure that the subcontractors are informed of the conditions listed below.

2. The University of Washington and/or other responsible parties shall implement the approved construction traffic plan.

Signature: (signature on file) Date July 9, 2009
Scott Kemp, Senior Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

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